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Chairman  
4th District, Oklahoma

*House Meets at 9:30 a.m. for Morning Hour and  
11:00 a.m. for Legislative Business  
(No Votes Before Noon)*

*Anticipated Floor Action:*

**H.R. 774—Women’s Business Center Amendments Act**  
**H.R. 858—District of Columbia Court Employees Whistleblowers Protection Act**  
**H.R. 807—Federal Reserve Board Retirement Portability Act**  
**H.Res. 105—Recognizing and Honoring the Life and Achievements of Joe  
DiMaggio**  
**H.Con.Res. 24—Expressing Congressional Opposition to the Unilateral  
Declaration of a Palestinian State**  
**H.R. 819—Federal Maritime Commission Authorization Act**



## **Bills Considered Under Suspension of the Rules**

**Floor Situation:** The House will consider the following five bills under suspension of the rules as its first order of business today. Each is debatable for 40 minutes, may not be amended, and requires a two-thirds majority vote for passage.

**H.R. 774—Women’s Business Center Amendments Act** amends the Small Business Act to increase the authorization for the Women’s Business Center (WBC) program from \$8 million to \$11 million each year for FYs 2000-2004. The bill changes the program’s matching fund requirement to increase the federal share of matching funds for WBC programs. Under current law, a business center must match each dollar of federal funds with two dollars of private funds in the fifth year that the center receives federal support. The bill reduces the fifth-year requirement to one dollar of private funds for every dollar of federal funds. The bill was introduced by Ms. Velazquez and was reported by the Small Business Committee by voice vote on February 25, 1999.

**H.R. 858—District of Columbia Court Employees Whistleblowers Protection Act** allows court employees to sue in Superior Court or in the U.S. District Court for any claims for retaliation for reporting waste, fraud, abuse, or mismanagement. This measure responds to findings in a GAO study requested by Congress last year to examine the financial and budgetary operations of D.C. courts. In 1998 the court fell far behind in its accounts-payable and also implemented a pay raise without congressional approval. In the course of the study, reports surfaced that court personnel have been reluctant to discuss their views on the financial and personnel management of the courts because they fear retaliation. Existing whistleblower protection laws do not cover D.C. court employees. The District's Merit Personnel Act protects all other city employees from retaliation. CBO states that H.R. 858 will not affect federal spending. The bill was introduced by Mr. Davis and was reported by the Government Reform Committee by voice vote.

**H.R. 807—Federal Reserve Board Retirement Portability Act** permits employees of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve Board (FRB) hired after December 31, 1983, to receive credit under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) for their post 1988-FRB employment if they choose to transfer to other federal agencies. Current law denies transferring credit for board service after 1988, causing employees to receive a smaller annuity when they retire than if they were employees of other federal agencies. In addition, the bill allows federal employees who have transferred, or plan to transfer, to move funds from their Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) accounts to the FRB's thrift plan. Finally, the bill grants veterans hired under the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act (*P.L. 105-339*) the same civil service protections and job opportunities as their co-workers; the 1998 law allows veterans to compete for federal job vacancies previously restricted to current employees. An official CBO estimate was not available at press time. The bill was introduced by Mr. Scarborough and was reported by the Government Reform Committee by voice vote.

**H.Res. 105** recognizes and honors the life and achievements of Joe DiMaggio (1) for his storied baseball career; (2) for his many contributions to the nation throughout his lifetime; and (3) for transcending baseball and becoming a symbol for the ages of talent, commitment, and achievement. DiMaggio died on March 8, 1999, at the age of 84, after a series of health complications after his recent lung cancer surgery.

Joe DiMaggio—the “Yankee Clipper”—was easily the most complete all-around baseball player of his generation. He burst onto the major-league landscape in 1936, helping the New York Yankees begin yet another dynasty. In his 13 seasons, they won 10 pennants and nine World Series. When he retired in 1951, he had a lifetime average of .325—down from the .339 it had been before he served three years in the military during World War II—and hit better than .300 on 11 occasions. He hit 361 career home runs, batted in more than 100 runs nine times, and won three most valuable player awards. Remarkably, he struck out only 369 times, a ratio of home runs to strikeouts that no other home run hitter even approaches. In the summer of 1941, DiMaggio hit safely in a major league record 56 consecutive games, and after it ended he immediately went on a 16-game hitting streak. Incredibly, DiMaggio wasn't elected to the Hall of Fame in his first year of eligibility (he was in his second).

His marriage to Marilyn Monroe was an amazing coupling of American celebrity-hood: the country's most revered athlete married to its most famed actress. Although the storybook marriage failed all too quickly, they remained friends after their divorce and—after her death in 1962—DiMaggio supervised her funeral arrangements and had flowers put on her grave three times a week for 20

years. DiMaggio remained in the spotlight as a spokesman for several companies, but he carried himself with grace even when he sold Mr. Coffee machines or appeared in advertisements for a New York bank. Years removed from those days, he remained an icon until his death, an American folk hero. The resolution was introduced by Mr. Rangel *et al.* and was not considered by any committee.

**H.Con.Res. 24—Expressing Congressional Opposition to the Unilateral Declaration of a Palestinian State** expresses the sense of Congress that (1) the final status of the territory controlled by the Palestinian Authority should be determined only through negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority; (2) any attempt to establish a Palestinian state outside the negotiating process will invoke strong congressional opposition; and (3) the president should unequivocally assert U.S. opposition to the unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state, making clear that such a declaration would be a grievous violation of the Oslo accords and would not be recognized by the U.S. The resolution was introduced by Mr. Salmon and was not reported by a House Committee. The Senate passed an identical resolution by a vote of 98-1 on March 11, 1999.

**Additional Information:** See *Legislative Digest*, Vol. XXVIII, #7, March 12, 1999.



## **H.R. 819—Federal Maritime Commission Authorization Act**

**Floor Situation:** The House will consider H.R. 819 after it completes consideration of H.Con.Res. 24. Last Wednesday, the Rules Committee granted an open rule that provides one hour of general debate, equally divided between the chairman and ranking minority member of the Transportation Committee. The rule accords priority in recognition to members who have their amendments pre-printed in the *Congressional Record* and waives the requirement that the committee report be available three days prior to floor consideration. The chairman of the Committee of the Whole may postpone votes and reduce the voting time on a postponed vote to five minutes, so long as it follows a regular 15-minute vote. Finally, the rule provides one motion to recommit, with or without instructions.

**Summary:** H.R. 819 authorizes \$15.7 million in FY 2000 and \$16.3 million in FY 2001 for Federal Maritime Commission (FMC) activities and programs. The FY 2000 level is \$1.5 million more than the FY 1999 amount, mainly due to (1) required annual cost-of-living-adjustments for FMC employees; (2) increased rent costs; (3) funding to support Y2K computer modernization efforts; and (4) additional money to fund the office of the new Federal Maritime Commissioner when he is confirmed by the Senate. In 1961, Congress established the Federal Maritime Commission (FMC) as an independent agency responsible for enforcing international shipping rules and regulations involving carriers (container ship operators), shippers (companies owning goods to be transported) and transportation facilitators such as freight forwarders, nonvessel operating common carriers, and customs brokers. Assuming appropriation of authorized amounts, CBO estimates that enactment of H.R. 819 will result in additional discretionary spending of approximately \$32 million over the FY 2000-2001 period. The bill was introduced by Messrs. Shuster, Oberstar, Gilchrest, and DeFazio; the Transportation Committee reported the measure by voice vote on March 2, 1999.

**Views:** The Republican leadership supports passage of the bill. The Clinton Administration does not object to passage of the measure.

**Amendments:** At press time, the *Legislative Digest* was unaware of any amendments to H.R. 819.

**Additional Information:** See *Legislative Digest*, Vol. XXVIII, #7, March 12, 1999.



PLEASE NOTE: UNDER AN OPEN RULE, MEMBERS MAY OFFER NEW AMENDMENTS TO A BILL AT ANY TIME, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THEY HAVE BEEN PRE-PRINTED IN THE *CONGRESSIONAL RECORD*.

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